sentiment and goodwill for the US in India and also have repercussions on the ongoing India-Pakistan dialogue. The US Administration's response has been that it values it relationship with India and is committed to taking it forward. As far as India-Pakistan relations were concerned, while the US has an arms supply relationship with Pakistan, it was supportive of the India-Pakistan dialogue

(g) and (h) Secretary of State has recognised the need to accommodate major rising powers like India in international institutions The two sides have subsequently agreed to discuss the various issues related to UN reform and engage closely In that context, Special Advisory to Dr Rice on UN reforms is likely to visit India. These are positive developments and we are hopeful of developing better understanding between our two countries on this issue.

Prime Minister's Mauritius visit

3759. SHRI LALIT SURI
SHRI RAVULA CHANDRA SEKAR REDDY:

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state

(a) whether the Prime Minister visited Mauritius recently;

(b) if so, the bilateral and multilateral issues figured in his talks with Mauritius leaders and the outcome thereof,

(c) whether any agreements were signed during the visit;

(d) if so, the salient features thereof and the benefits to be accrued to India as a result thereof, agreement wise; and

(e) in what manner the implementation thereof would be watched and ensured?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (RAO INDERJEET SINGH): (a) Yes, Sir. Honourable Prime Minister visited Mauritius from 30 March to 2 April 2005.

(b) A broad range of issues of mutual interest were discussed during this visit. India has extremely close relations with Mauritius and a number of proposals for boosting cooperation between the two countries in the fields of commerce, economy, defence, small scale industries, oil were discussed. It is envisaged that as a result of this visit Indo-Mauritian ties will be further strengthened and consolidated.

(c) Four agreements were signed during this visit which are as follows:

(i) Agreement for setting up of a Joint Working Group on combating international Terrorism,

(ii) MoU relating to Bilateral Air Services between India and Mauritius

(iii) MoU on Cooperation in the field of Protection of the Environment.

(iv) MoU on offering a fresh line of Credit of US$10 million for the Baie du Tombeau Sewerage Project.

(d) Salient features of above agreements:

I. Agreement for setting up of a Joint Working Group on combating international Terrorism: The main objectives of setting up a Joint Working Group on Terrorism are as follows:

(i) Share experience in combating international terrorism, organized crime and illicit trafficking in arms, narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances and their linkages;

(ii) Coordinate approaches to combat such international terrorism and terrorist acts, organized crime, syndicates and groups dealing in drug trafficking, trafficking in arms, money laundering and other economic offences;

(iii) Exchange information on the activities of terrorist and organized criminal groups and their associates that may operate from or use the territories of either party;

(iv) Establish an institutional framework for such cooperation.

II. MoU relating to Bilateral Air Services between India and Mauritius:

(i) This aims to expand, increase and improve the frequency of air services between India and Mauritius.

(ii) It gives fifth freedom traffic rights to designated airline from India in Mauritius for onward fights to two points in South Africa. Similarly, it grants to designated airlines from Mauritius in India for onward flights to Pakistan and China.

III. MOU on Cooperation in the field of Protection of the Environment:

This aims to foster and establish close cooperation between India and Mauritius for protection and improvement of their environment. It envisages adoption of a number of measures with following objectives in view:

(a) prevention of Coastal Erosion, Lagoon Pollution, loss of biodiversity and damage of the reef system; (b) to deal effectively with various problems relating to pollution; (c) to exchange relevant information in this regard; (d) to take effective steps to ensure treatment of waste water from industries and sugar mills; (e) to evolve low cost and environmentally sound technologies for pollution control; (f) to take various other measures as appropriate to bring about improvement of environment and its protection.

IV. **MOU on offering a fresh line of Credit of US$10 million for the Baie du Tombeau Sewerage Project:**

This credit line will be operated by Exim Bank of India as per the norms and procedures in force and will be utilized by Government of Mauritius for implementing Baie du Tombeau Sewerage Project.

As regards the benefits which will accrue to India from these Agreements/ MOUs: It is hoped that these Agreements/MoUs will lead to increased economic cooperation between India and Mauritius and to improved communications between them. It is also envisaged that they will help both the countries to take requisite measures for better ensuring their internal security as well as for better protection and improvement of their environment.

(e) The bilateral relations between India and Mauritius are reviewed on a regular basis. There is continuous consultation and interaction between India and Mauritius at different levels. It would thus be ensured that these agreements are being implemented.

Nuclear energy co-operation between India and USA

3760. DR. T. SUBBARAMI REDDY:
SHRI JESUDASU SEELAM:

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether U.S. Administration as well as the U.S. Congress has decided to launch negotiations with India on facilitating nuclear energy co-operation with India;

(b) if so, to what extent India has welcomed this move;

(c) whether U.S. has also decided to make a concerted bid through competitive prices and superior technology for 126 Fighter aircraft contract that India is currently seeking offers for from major defence manufacturers in France, Russia, U.S. and Sweden;